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Board of Equalization Vice Chairman Michelle Steel Sees Base Sales Tax Rate Reduction as Taxpayer Victory



Michelle Park Steel

Michelle Park Steel is vice chairman of the State Board of Equalization. She was elected to this post in 2006 and represents the more than eight million people who reside in that board's Third District, which includes Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and portions of San Bernardino and San Diego Counties. In this capacity, Steel is the highest-ranking Republican woman in California and the highest-ranking Korean-American officeholder in the United States.

Steel earned a degree in business from Pepperdine University and an Executive MBA from the University of Southern California. From 2001 to 2003, she served on the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders under President George W. Bush.

A successful businesswoman, Steel is a strong advocate for the state's taxpayers. Her interest in tax issues goes back to childhood, when she watched her mother try unsuccessfully to fight a tax bill from the State Board of Equalization. As both an immigrant and a small-business owner, Steel's mother lacked the resources to battle the massive state agency and reluctantly acceded to what she believed were its unjustified and unjustifiable demands.

In July, the Orange County Taxpayers Association (OCTax) selected Steel as one of nine finalists for a Rose Award, the honor OCTax bestows on individuals and organizations that have been friends to taxpayers in the previous year. Other individual finalists included Orange County Supervisor John Moorlach, Orange County Sheriff Sandra Hutchens, and Jack Dean, founder of the Pension Tsunami blog.

Steel sees the July 1 reduction of the statewide base sales tax rate from 8.25 percent to 7.25 percent as a victory for the Golden State's taxpayers because it will allow them to keep more of the income they work so hard to earn. She points out, however, that even after this reduction, California continues to have the highest sales tax rate in the nation, which she finds alarming because it drives businesses from the state and disproportionately hurts residents with the lowest incomes.

Concluded Steel in an opinion piece headed "Brown's Plan To Hike Taxes Will Hurt the Poor More Than the Rich," which was published by the *Press-Enterprise* on June 4, 2011, "When government takes its hands out of taxpayers' pockets, they can pay their mortgages, buy school supplies for their children, and buy gas for their cars. When government reins in wasteful spending, it can build roads, provide public safety, and educate our kids efficiently and responsibly. When the state lives within its means, it's not necessary to raise taxes on the poor." Amen!

Upcoming OCAR Speaker Series Events



Orange County Sheriff Sandra Hutchens

Thursday, Sept. 15 at 1:00 P.M.
OCAR Laguna Hills



C.A.R. Chief Economist Leslie Appleton-Young

Friday, Oct. 21 at 10:00 A.M.
OCAR Laguna Hills

RSVP for these and other OCAR
events at www.OCAR.org